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our voice

THE spare change magazine

DEC 2000
VOL. 7 NO. 12

Photo & cover design: P. de Vos, Jr.



THE CHRISTMAS
CHRISTMAS
ISSUE

RUDOLPH
WITH YOUR
NOSE SO BRIGHT,
WON'T YOU PUSH
OUR CART TONIGHT

Your vendor pays up to 50c per copy

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OUR VOICE is published to provide an income opportunity for economically marginalized people in our society while communicating about their issues to the public.

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Our Voice invites your contributions and input.

Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, unless otherwise indicated.

Our Voice welcomes written submissions (particularly those on PC or Mac compatible diskettes), cartoons, photographs or artwork.

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Opinions expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of Our Voice, the editors or publishers.

Our Voice is a member of the North American Street Newspaper Association (NASNA).

LAWYERS CLAIM EPIDEMIC OF ABUSE BY CITY COPS

"There's the 'head stun' where the person is hit hard on the head with the heel of the hand; the 'wrist lock' where your arm is twisted behind you and your hand forced back toward your wrist; you could be kicked in the abdomen or testicles, or your head slammed into the door frame of the police car when your hands are cuffed behind your back, or pulled up from the ground by your hands cuffed behind your back. These are the garden-variety abuses. There is also an overuse of the tactical team, weapons being pointed, doors being smashed down, physical assault."

Lawyer Tom Engel, a member of the Police Conduct Committee of the Criminal Trial Lawyers Association, says abuse by Edmonton City Police has reached "epidemic" proportions.

"They (the police) know what they're doing and how to get away with it. It won't happen to a lawyer's son. It will happen to someone who is poor, or intoxicated, someone who is uneducated, doesn't know their rights, someone who would obviously lack credibility when it came down to my word against his."

Concern with the number of complaints of police abuse they were hearing from their clients, the Criminal Trial Lawyers Association, with over 100 members in Edmonton, formed a Police Conduct Committee last year. "In conversations with each other we realized that there were a

significant number of similar complaints from clients unknown to each other. We intended the committee to be a kind of clearinghouse for information and, if possible, a voice for the voiceless", Engel says.

The complaints come mainly from people accused of minor crimes such as public

about this type of abuse."

"I get 7 or 8 people a month referred to me by other lawyers who know I am willing to file civil suits."

Sergeant Jeff Anderson of the EPS's media relations department refused to give the concerns any credibility. "It's all hearsay. Unless we have names, dates, statements there is nothing we can do. Does the Police Conduct Committee have any documentation? Any report we can look at? Until there is something concrete it's very hard to take seriously."

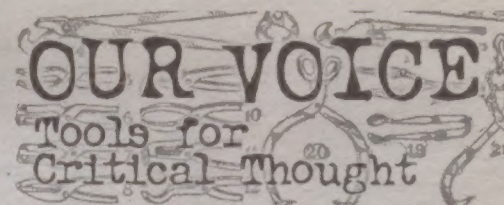
This response, while expected, angers Engel. "They are completely aware of the complaints that have been filed and the civil suits pending against them." Repeated requests by Our Voice for an interview with the Chief of Police were ignored, or at least received no response.

NATASHA LAURENCE



intoxication, traffic stops, causing a disturbance, unlawfully in a private place, and are alarmingly high in the downtown beats division and along Whyte Avenue.

"It is an indictment of the Edmonton Police Service that we do not hear these complaints from clients in other jurisdictions. I have clients in Wetaskiwin and Hobbema and it is extremely rare to hear



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DEC HIGHLIGHTS

T'IS THE SEASON



CHRISTMAS SEASON

The Christmas season is upon us once more
A time of gaiety and merriment, so they say
Shopping for presents, rushing from store to store
Frenzied buying takes hold as the days slip away.

The Christmas season means getting a tree
A tree to be decorated by tinsel and colored lights
Artificial snow and an angel at the top for all to see
Decorations adorn the house and it creates an awesome sight.

The Christmas season means a trip to the forest
With my axe I tramp through the bush and snow
Seeking a perfect tree is my ultimate quest
Decorated, it will sit in the living room all aglow

The Christmas season all too soon comes to an end
Leaving a mess that I will have to clean
Discard the tree; throw it out like a disgruntled friend
It did its job; a better tree had never been seen.

PATCHES



THE 12 DAYS OF POOR PEOPLES CHRISTMAS

On the first day of Christmas our government gave to us,

One used appliance box, as shelter from the cold.

On the second day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Two empty grocery bags stuffed with paper on which to rest our heads.

On the third day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Three pairs of work socks to keep our feet warm.

On the fourth day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Four pigeons to roast for our Christmas dinner.

On the fifth day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Five round rings of bologna (to go with the pigeons)

On the sixth day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Six day-old dinner buns.

On the seventh day of Christmas our government

gave to us,

Donuts for dessert.

On the eighth day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Two pairs of mittens, two toques, 2 scarves, 2 pairs of earmuffs, to protect us from the cold.

On the ninth day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Nine cans of coke to wash down our dinner.

On the tenth day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Five quarters and five dimes to phone family and friends to wish them Happy Christmas.

On the eleventh day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Eleven days to move out of the province.

On the twelfth day of Christmas our government gave to us,

Twelve choices of provinces and territories to move to.

CEC GARFIN

STREET-LIFE

Down and out in urbanville
Where the streets are hard and cold
Flop joints
Soup line-ups
The remand
Who cares, do you?
Pass me that bottle, bro'
For I don't care anymore

For eighteen long bloody years
I pounded the streets
Only to find a dead-end
Of an empty bottle of wine
Help me brother, for I am dying

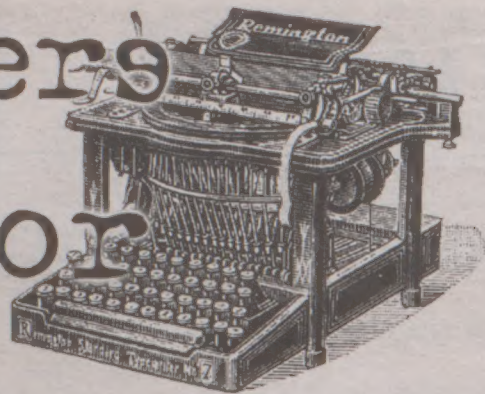
Sitting in the joint one Christmas eve
Nowhere to run
I fell to my knees, and cried out
"Lord help me, I can't handle it anymore
it's now in your hands"

He works in mysterious ways
for the call is answered
it's been nine years
since my release from self
and from the streets of urbanville
where my heart is not so hard and cold
hey brother! There is a way

A. PICHE'

"I quit drinking on Oct. 8, 1991"

Letters to the Editor



AT LEAST WE STILL EXIST

It greatly disappoints me that a fellow graduate of mine, Grant Jongejan, has deliberately gone out of his way to be totally disrespectful to one of Edmonton's homeless (Vendors claim police brutality, OV, Sept. 2000). I thought Mr. Dea and Brother John at St. Francis Xavier School had instilled a better value system in him.

It upsets me that Ed Mahar was the victim, but the principle is that this victim could just as likely have been my husband or me. We may not be homeless, but we struggle to maintain our life with two children, and every so often we have to use food banks and walk the inner city streets with Ed and others. We find our own dignity in "at least we still exist."

D. LANGSTAFF

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10 GREAT REASONS TO SUPPORT OUR VOICE DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON...

We here at Our Voice do a lot more than just sell a magazine. We build human dignity by creating opportunities to succeed. We offer a voice to those who would not otherwise be heard.

As we look ahead to the coming year there are many reasons to be hopeful. And as we reflect on the year past there is much to celebrate.

TEN TERRIFIC REASONS TO BUY AND READ OV

10. Aside from selling the magazine, vendors contribute articles, poetry, cartoons and editorials to make our publication the most interesting read in Edmonton.

9. Our Voice builds bridges. We move between 8000 and 13000 papers each month. We educate the public about poverty and homelessness in our city.

8. Our Voice is a project of Bissell Centre, Edmonton's oldest agency working hard in the inner city community.

7. Our Voice makes an immediate difference in the lives of the poor. Anyone can become a vendor after a brief orientation and for many homeless people Our Voice has been the road off the street.

6. We do a lot with very little. Operating on a tight budget with only four full-time staff and many volunteers we are able to publish a quality well-balanced magazine each month.

5. We support the local and global social justice communities. Our Voice sponsors and participates in a wide variety of social justice activities through the year, like Raj Pannu's Art from the Unknown, for low-income artists, Parkland Institute conferences and Nechi Addictions Awareness Week and Sober Walk.

4. Our Voice works hard at challenging our political systems and advocating on behalf of the poor regarding systems that are harmful and degrading.

3. Our Voice puts more than \$150,000 into the pockets of our 100 + vendors each year.

2. Our Voice is a project that has moved past charity and looks at empowerment and justice as the way to end poverty in our communities.

1. Our Voice comforts the afflicted and afflicts the comfortable. We publish quality journalism that plays hard but stays fair. We always put the voice of the poor first.

TEN THINGS OUR VOICE LOOKS FORWARD TO IN 2001.

10. An increased circulation forcing the Edmonton Journal and the Edmonton Sun out of business.

9. Huge increases in advertising revenues with contracts with Telus and the tobacco companies.

8. Fundraising proposals that actually raise funds.

7. More intense political activism and organizing.

6. Warmer weather or warmer jackets for the vendors.

5. George W. Bush on the cover-topless!

4. Stockwell Day going bankrupt and being forced to become a vendor of Our Voice, but then when he gets caught selling drunk our new vendor peer review panel takes him down and he's forced to panhandle because he will have nowhere else to turn. Choices are limited buddy boy!

3. The Provincial Election and an opportunity to end the Klein revolution and begin a revolution that actually involves the voice and ideas of citizens.

2. Continued opportunities and support for poor/homeless Edmontonians and our very own radio show.

1. Our Vendor Smilin' Victor regaining his spot at the I.G.A. in Old Strathcona.

TEN GREATEST MOMENTS IN 2000.

10. Natasha Laurence becoming our new Community Editor.

9. Our shiny new logo.

8. The Fox enters the henhouse.

7. Lots of publicity for our sixth anniversary sale-a-bration and a great anniversary fundraiser at the Rev.

6. Vendor Reg Taylor's aggressive run for Prime Minister.

5. Challenging World Class Idiot Ted Nugent to a Street Fight and realizing that he truly is a coward because he never responded to us.

4. Breaking a story on two cops who continuously brutalized two Our Voice vendors and forcing Edmonton Police Internal Affairs to conduct an investigation into police brutality.

3. The formation of the Our Voice Advisory committee which works to provide a balance of ideas and accountability toward the operation of the magazine on behalf of writers, vendors, staff and customers.

2. HOSTING THE 2000 NORTH AMERICAN STREET NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE AND DOING IT VERY VERY WELL. More than 100 people from across North America attended to evolve a great social justice movement.

1. When vendor/writer John Zapantis grew his moustache!

"GOOCHEE, GOOCHEE
JOHNNY Z"



Odd?



Photo: PF de Vos, Jr.

Yes! But a great gift, Nonetheless

ANOTHER BYGONE ELECTION

Prior to the recent election campaign a poll stated that homelessness would be the fourth most important issue for Canadians to consider while choosing the next government. Unfortunately for the 200,000 plus people living on the street across this country, homelessness received very little attention.

As we've turned the corner into a new century and new global economy that "promises" prosperity beyond anything we've ever imagined, more and more of our citizens are being pushed out to fight over scraps of public space to find warmth and safety.

We can say homelessness is not a concern of Canadians so therefore was not an issue the campaigning parties needed waste their time on. It wasn't going to get them the votes they needed.

Our Voice received some criticism in November because of our apparent negative slant toward the election in our last issue. The question we asked many

people on the street is -were they going to vote knowing it would be easier for them to vote

HEAVY



Do Not Lift

as citizens have, people felt powerless and voting wouldn't change that.

because of improvements to accessibility? The articles we published pertaining to the election reflected what people were telling us, and what they were telling us was that voting wasn't something they saw as useful. The general feeling was it would take a lot more than making it more physically accessible to vote. People living in poverty off or on the streets generally had no reason to believe their vote would make any difference. Even though voting is one of the supposed bits of power we

For the poor, the feelings of powerlessness are generally more substantial than for the rest of society.

One person stated it very clearly. She said, "They have to make it more than easier for us to vote; they have to make it easier for us to live. Than maybe we'll feel empowered by the whole process."

Ironically this recent campaign didn't really get to issues, homelessness included. It was a personality campaign. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation was almost as voiceless as the homeless advocates. Mind you the wealthy got their tax cuts before the campaign officially began and the homeless as usual got nothing.

So maybe next time around, rather than a parliamentary committee to increase access to voting for the homeless there should be a parliamentary committee to increase access to housing, decent support programs and decent paying jobs. If we didn't have homeless people we wouldn't have to worry about making it easier for them to vote.

MICHAEL WALTERS

AS IF TRYING TO SURVIVE ISN'T PAINFUL ENOUGH

In his book, *The Public Interest*, published in 1992, Peter Drucker wrote:

"Every few hundred years in Western history, there occurs a sharp transformation. Within a few short decades, society - its world view, its basic values, its social and political structure, its arts, its key institutions - rearranges itself. Fifty years later, there is a new world. And the people born then cannot even imagine the world in which their grandparents lived and into which their own parents were born. We are currently living through such a transformation."

The situation of poverty in Canada has been transformed in our lifetime. It has widened and deepened and, in many cases, become entrenched. And far too often, it has been ignored. It is time for another, more positive transformation so that our most vulnerable citizens can enjoy the quality of life that as Canadians, they should be able to take for granted.

How does one convey the reality of poverty in mere words to those of us who have not experienced its pain, who have not felt, touched or smelled it? Unless one has walked in the footsteps of the poor, one can never truly understand their bleak and cruel struggle for survival.

In a January 1999 article by Lawrence Martin titled, *Send Team Canada on a Poverty Tour*, he writes, "The country's leaders are well-meaning enough, but if they don't see the desperation and sense the pain, how do they begin to address the problem?" He suggested that the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and corporate leaders who are used to trade missions should "journey through the ghettos of despair. Let their complacency be given a jolt and from their fact-finding mission, some public private solution could come." I say amen to that.

According to Unicef, Canada ranks 17th out of 23 industrialized countries in its treatment of low income people and yet, the United Nations tells us Canada is

the best country in the world in which to live. Sadly, the political table is sparse, political platforms give us a nibble here and there, but where is the groundswell, the collective voice that cries out - Enough!

There is an overwhelming sense of abandonment among the poor and the continuing inequalities between rich and poor offers enough proof that economic development alone does not create equal opportunities for everyone - good economic policy must be linked with good social policy - you can't have one without the other.

Last month, Rosella Melanson, a New Brunswick columnist, asked this question, "Why has it become left wing, idealistic or unrealistic to ask that something be done to alleviate poverty? Now that we have wiped out the budget deficit, could we try to deal with the human deficit?"

As if trying to survive is not painful enough, low income Canadians are often treated as second-class citizens facing discrimination (poor bashing) which diminishes them as persons. Poor bashing promotes discrimination and blames the poor for their poverty. Humanity is sorely lacking in many areas of Canadian society.

In December 1997 and in response to these attitudes and in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights, I, with the encouragement and support of my party (Progressive Conservative), introduced Bill S-11 in the Senate of Canada. Its aim was to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include "social condition" as a prohibited form of discrimination in areas of federal jurisdiction.

It was one of the major recommendations I made in my report, *Sounding the Alarm: Poverty in Canada*. Bill S-11 passed unanimously in the Senate in June 1998. However, the following spring, it died a dignified death in the House of Commons. All opposition parties, except the Reform Party, supported the Bill and 25

Liberal backbenchers voted with their conscience and lent their support. It was significant too that the Minister of Justice assured me that "social condition" would be one of the priorities when the Human Rights Act was reviewed. It was a partial victory because we were able to bring the issue of discrimination against Canada's poor to another level.

The Canadian Human Rights Act Review Panel released its report last June. It contained 165 recommendations. The Panel agreed with the need to protect the human rights of the poor and recommended that "social condition" be recognized in the Act as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination, and added that the Minister of Justice recommend to the Cabinet that the government review all programs to deal with the inequalities created by poverty." Poor bashing, they said, must not be tolerated.

Human rights activists, social action groups, front line workers, the marginalized and every citizen with a social conscience was elated. The Executive Director of the National Anti-Poverty Organization commented: "This is the first time in my memory that a federally appointed body has formally recognized the existence of poor bashing in Canada and the significant threat it represents to the realization of human rights in Canada."

Our mission now is to ensure the Canadian Human Rights Act recommendations are agreed to by the government, and that they become a priority on it's agenda. I urge each of you to bombard the Justice Minister with letters, so the issue of poor bashing, discrimination against the poor, will become part of the Human Rights Act.

After November 27, Canada will have a new government - let us remind them that Canadians want a compassionate society, one based on justice, equality and opportunity for all and that they develop social policies that embrace these principles.

SENATOR ERMINE JOY COHEN, SPECIAL TO OUR VOICE

BARBECUING THE SACRED COW



Photo: PF de Vos, Jr.

Is The Soap Box Worth It?

The seminal idea I came away with from the recent Parkland



Conference-Building a Post-Corporate Society was: the relationship between an individual's freedom to think and act in any truly original or revolutionary way, or to develop personal power, is related inversely to the amount of energy they have invested in maintaining the status quo. The millionaire has an investment of 100% in maintaining the status quo; that is what keeps the dollars rolling in. The barefoot monk standing on a dusty road in India with his robe and his begging bowl has an investment of 0% in maintaining the status quo. He has nothing to lose or to gain from change.

Conversely, personal power increases in a direct ratio to the amount of energy a person is able to recover for themselves from an investment in maintaining the status quo. The monk on the dusty road in India knows this. So do the people who put rice in his bowl. In the West the concept of personal power is not very well understood, perhaps because very few people have ever had any actual experience of it. The reward on the scale between 100% investment in the status quo and 0% investment is the personal power to make the choice where you are going to make a stand.

Everybody at the Parkland Conference had good ideas about how to use the earth's resources more gently and fairly. Looking about these rooms and corridors full of intensely ardent, earnest and sincere middle-class people, I wondered how many had yet realized that the first and hardest question of all to answer would have to be: how much am I prepared to sacrifice of my personal involvement in maintaining the status quo? How many of these people have realized that the price of being free to act and think in a revolutionary way, which all agreed was needed to bring about the "new paradigm", an oft-repeated phrase at the conference, may start with the question: how much am I prepared to risk of my personal investment-my job, my spouse, my possessions, my reputation, my life?

Our Voice vendors approach the monk's end of the spectrum, though probably with considerably less insight. We hope Bissell will continue publishing this paper but have no other meaningful investment in maintaining the status quo of Western civilization. Our Voice writers have a bit more invested; we like our soap box. Our Voice staff have a personal investment

in a job that is an entry level to middle-class society. They want that society to be there for them and so have very little freedom to act on revolutionary or creative concepts that might jeopardize their future prospects for a 'real' job. The Bissell Center itself, with a 2.3 million dollar annual budget, has a huge investment in maintaining the status quo. Do anything at all to offend government or private donors and scores of middle and lower class poverty industry jobs can be lost.

Our Voice vendors and writers have very little to lose. We don't make much money and certainly do not gain social status from this program. We are asking for that "new paradigm" now. We are asking for it from other people in the Our Voice organization and the Bissell who do have a lot to lose. So far, no dice. Our Voice is the microcosm of the world as it stands now. Those employed by this representative of the poverty industry are not going to risk personal security or ambition to empower poor people. How then are we writers to keep writing with any heart, hope or soul for this publication? For me this is a very troubling question. Is the soap box worth it? Is there a place on the scale between 100% investment in the status quo and 0% where risk and reward achieve a balance? This is a question everyone is going to have to examine whether we want to or not, if the planet, much less Our Voice, is going to survive.

Bob Dylan sang 30 years ago "If your times to you are worth saving, you better start swimming or you'll sink like a stone, for the times they are a' changin'." This time around we are going to need change, not just more songs.

Theresa McBryan

This column represents my personal opinion and not the opinions of Our Voice or the Bissell Centre.

SLUM LANDLORDS



Photo: PF de Vos, Jr.

I guess you could say this is the slum area of Edmonton - the neighborhood I call home. It's on the news a lot. Just days ago, my son phoned me from work to let me know, "Mom, we just saw your house on television. They found a body across

the fence."

Of course, I already knew about the body. I was there just after it was found. I had just driven my daughter to school, then parked the car smack beside the dumpster. It turned out that the pile of bedding there contained a dead body.

The house I live in is deteriorating. There's no other word to describe the steady decline. Even as I sit, I glance nervously at the ceiling directly overhead, on the alert for falling debris. The other day, my daughter, who has the suite upstairs, put her foot through the floor in the bathroom. Chunks of plaster, small boards, and other debris rained on my computer.

The bathroom floor had rotted because of a leak in the plumbing; a leak that's gone unfixed for months. Whenever the toilet is flushed on the main floor, it rains in the basement, but putting money into this house is a losing proposition for the landlord. Several other old houses on the block have been sold for lot value - somewhere around \$33,000, but my landlord paid more than twice that for this house six years ago.

Living here is like playing a card game. And the landlord has the better cards. Any move I make has to be carefully calculated because of the risk involved. If I complain too much, I just might wind up with a three-month eviction notice.

I could phone the health board, but they might walk in and condemn the property, forcing me to move out. I can't afford a move, not financially and certainly not physically or mentally. Or, the health board could give the landlord a list of things to be repaired, and once the house is fixed up, he might raise the rent to compensate. It's happened to me before, when I was living in an old house in Norwood. The landlord repaired and painted, completing all the requested repairs, then raised the rent by \$150 per month. I moved.

I've learned that it's safest not to make waves. Just learn to live around the inconveniences - easier to do in the winter if one of those inconveniences is a dead refrigerator. The landlord said he'd find a new one in the Bargain Finder, but I guess free fridges aren't too readily come by, because that was in February.

But the rent is reasonable. And I really can't afford to move. Last spring the landlord was considering selling the place. I looked for another house to move into, and discovered that landlords don't want me as a

renter. One landlord told me I needed to have at least \$1,500 up front before he would take an application - enough for first and last months' rent and a damage deposit. Others gave excuses about how their house was already promised to someone else, or they wanted a damage deposit before I could even write out an application. They weren't interested in my references, or in who I was. Just the fact that I was making so little money that I was being topped up by welfare was enough to make me a poor risk.

That's not surprising. My landlord has told me that the last half-dozen tenants all moved out owing a month or more in unpaid rent.

Poor people are poor risks. We simply cannot afford to pay rent on one accommodation and finance a move to another in the same month - not since the social services cut out damage deposits and moving expenses from their budget. And some of those past tenants also left behind broken furniture, household junk and a big cleaning job as well. Shampooing rugs costs money. Hiring someone to take away unwanted furniture also costs money.

The landlord really isn't a bad person. He's a businessman, trying to make money on his investment. Unfortunately, keeping up an old house is costly. I

was talking to an elderly friend who owns a house built in the 1920's and she said it costs roughly \$3000 a year just in upkeep. Still, I wonder, if this same property were located in the university area or in Millwoods, would it be kept up? And how much would the rent be - would that skyrocket in response?

Linda Dumont



HOMELESS IN WINNIPEG

Winnipeg has one of the harshest environments in Canada in which to be homeless with temperatures that range from a scorching 30 degrees in summer to 40 below in winter. While city officials claim homelessness is not a problem, poverty advocates disagree.

According to a report done by the Main Street Project shelter, which is, with the Salvation Army, the main support facility for the homeless, numbers have been on the rise steadily in recent years: from 13,301 in 1994 to 19,731 in 2000 - an increase of 48%. Sixty-five percent of all admissions were people of Aboriginal descent and the average age was 41 years-old.

Joan Dawkins, the executive director of the Main Street Project, says that inadequate welfare rates are at the root of the problem.

"It is impossible for a person to live on five hundred dollars a month - most of them pay more than half their check on housing. The poor also have challenges that compound their already precarious lives: health issues, mental health issues, addictions, and lack of education; these are tremendous challenges. It only takes a small crisis for a person living in extreme poverty to find themselves on the street."

Not all users of food banks are homeless, but David Northcott, head of Winnipeg Harvest, an organization that collects food for food banks, says that the number of families using food banks is on the rise, as well as the number of 'working poor'.

John Richardson, of the Salvation Army, says that a big issue is the fact that emergency services like the Main Street Project and Salvation Army act as custodians to people who really need remedies and long-term help to alleviate poverty.

"Poverty is the real issue with the homeless," said Richardson. "We need to look at alleviating poverty not just fixing their short-term emergencies. Salvation Army has programs for addictions, families, and the incarcerated, but poverty is an issue that needs reme-

dy."

According to Canadian Council on Social Development: of the 606,800 people living in Winnipeg, 147,400 live below the poverty line. Aboriginals have the highest percentage of poverty, 63%; visible minorities, 50%; and the disabled at 38%.

And the number of children living in poverty in Winnipeg is still the highest in Canada. One in four children in Winnipeg live in poverty. This is based on 'Campaign 2000' research done recently. The number of children using food banks is still on the rise. Growth in provincial childcare expenditures has slowed considerably since 1995, and three provinces (Ontario,

poverty advocate, says that while homelessness is not as prevalent as in Toronto "Every year someone freezes to death on the street in Winnipeg. The resources are there, but policies have to change - there needs to be more support for poor people, and city hall doesn't view social issues as a big enough priority in Winnipeg. Homelessness is an issue here as well as poverty in general

David Anderson, aged 34, has been living at the Salvation Army and Main Street Project for two weeks now.

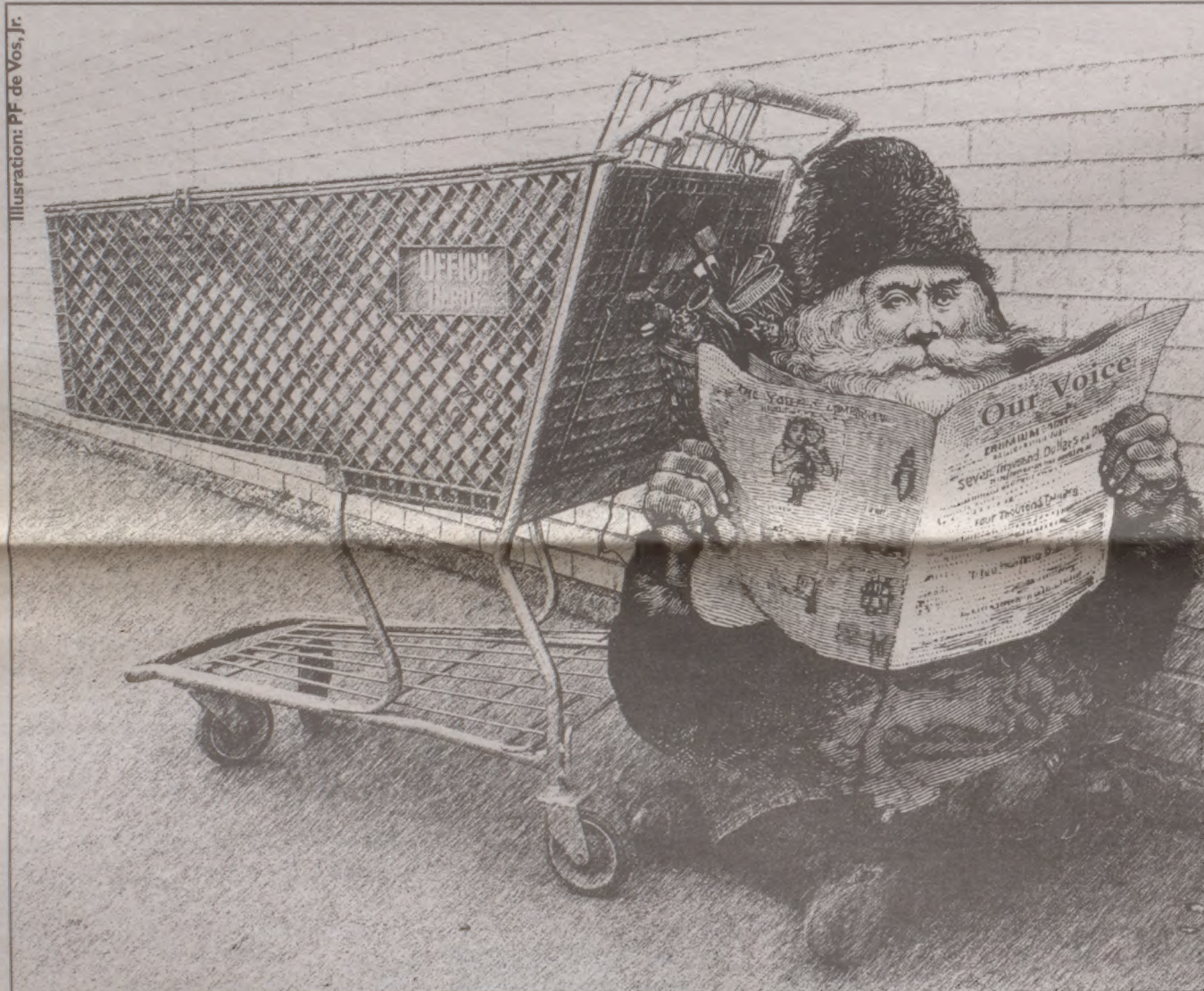
"I was working on a construction job just recently but ended up on the street because I couldn't afford the

extreme debts I had. I couldn't face going to relatives for help and I can't get welfare because I'm waiting for a settlement from my previous employer - it's a stressful situation but what else can I do. I have to go to the soup kitchens and live in a shelter until everything works out. The temporary job services have given me some work, but most work is minimum wage, which I have taken. What I need, though, is another good job - I just have too many debts and bills to pay. The stress is difficult and the depression, but I'm thankful to the volunteers at these places; it's opened my eyes to what others have to face."

"Southside Johnny" has been homeless, on and off for years. He says resources are not adequate and there is a lack of care. "These people (the homeless)

are some of the nicest people I've ever met, but the respect they get is not as much as could fill a thimble. If the population of this country would give us as much respect as the mighty and proud we'd have a nicer stay." Southside Johnny was once a successful real estate agent but ended up homeless many years ago, as he says, 'Because of an acute gambling addiction'.

RODNEY GRAHAM



Manitoba and Alberta) are spending less now than in 1995. (Campaign 2000)

Doug Woods of Siloam Mission says that the numbers of homeless visiting his mission have been increasing. "There are about 110 to 140 people coming in daily for food, and that is a marked increase since a few years ago. We were forced to move from our previous location, partly because of the Pan Am Games in 1997. We were expropriated at the time. Fortunately, we have a good location; ironically, close to city hall."

Nick Ternette, Winnipeg's most outspoken anti-



WAR

"There were times when I was there that I thought this what a modern day residential school would be like. It was a taste of what my mother went through."

Teresa, former resident of Hope Mission.

Hope Mission, a Christian non-profit organization, is under contract to Correction Services Canada to provide halfway house services for up to 13 women. At any given time at least half of those women are Aboriginal. While this should not necessarily present a problem there are serious concerns among some of the women about the treatment they receive there. "We are not allowed to smudge, even outside on the grounds. We were told to take down a dreamcatcher we had hung in the window of the smoking room. If we speak up for ourselves we are told we are not respecting the staff. We are treated like children. Our monthly allowance is tied to attending morning circle, which is centered on teachings from the Bible."

Hope Mission's philosophy, a quote from the Bible says, "Leaving those things which are behind, let us press on towards the high call of God in Jesus Christ." Just before she threatened to sue Our Voice, Alberta Wood, Director of Women's Programs for the organization, confirmed that sentiment. "We are a Christian organization. It is not our intent to diminish anyone's beliefs. They can have their native paraphernalia in their rooms, but not in the common area. They are not allowed to smudge or burn sweet grass. It's against fire regulations."

Enquiries with similar organizations, which allow smudging, were met with incredulity. Al Gordon, manager of Corrections and Addictions programs for Catholic Social Services says, "I don't believe it's any more a fire hazard than burning the toast or smoking. There is no fire there."

Mike Smith, graduate of Nechi and employee at Bissell Centre, had a slightly stronger response, "It's bullshit. It's nonsense. They're not allowing the women to touch on their spirit, on who they are. We smudge to cleanse our mind, body, and spirit. The smoke rises up to the Creator. It's the first thing we do before we say our prayers. The message I hear being spoken is the old residential school

way of thinking. They were extermination camps. They exterminated our spirits, our humanness, who the Creator meant us to be. This is the same thing."

When questioned further about the reasons for the ban on smudging, Wood admitted that, fire regulations aside, "We are a Christian organization. When they smudge, the smoke is applied to themselves to cleanse them from their sins. We believe you can only be cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Every woman who comes here knows we are a Christian organization. They are well informed of that. Everyone goes through an interview, and they sign an agreement, which states they will not be allowed to burn sweet grass. They are well-informed and it is their choice."

Unfortunately the scope of that choice is often limited by the availability of space. Edmonton has only two halfway houses for women in the federal corrections system. One, Elpida House, run by Catholic Social Services (which supports the full practice, including smudging, of the spirituality of its residents), has space for thirteen women at a time. That space is not always available. Choice becomes a theory impossible to practice. And fundamental to the issue is the question of whether or not a person can sign away their right to who they are. According to Mike Smith it is central to the health and healing of First Nations people to practice their spirituality. "It is our 'I am-ness.' It was taken from us then. It will not be taken from us now."

Alberta Wood suggests, while "my heart goes out to them," maybe "they should build facilities for them."

Allen Sholatuck, one of the managers at Correction Service Canada responsible for awarding the half-way house contracts, says the organizations are chosen by their ability to fulfill the minimum requirements set out by the Department. These include facility space and availability of trained staff. Audits are performed regularly, but these do not include input from the residents.

THE MONEY GRAB

At least as disturbing as the concerns around spirituality is what appears to be the misappropriation of funds on the part of Hope Mission. When Theresa Jones received

her monthly allowance cheque from Hope Mission in September, it was \$100 less than she expected. Paid by Corrections Services Canada to unemployed women on day parole, the 4.30 per day is meant to cover miscellaneous expenses. Teresa was led to believe that money had been taken from her cheque because, while attending an Anger Management program, she had not been able to be part of Morning Circle or to complete assigned chores. When she asked Alberta Wood for a copy of her work evaluation, she was told it was none of her business and she could get a lawyer if she wanted to pursue it.

However, Allen Sholatuck, of Corrections Services Canada, told Our Voice that the monthly allowance for unemployed women is meant to go directly to the women, "to buy the things they need." It is not to be tied to compliance with specific programs or chores. He says he has no knowledge of the allowance being used in the way Teresa describes, and does not believe that this is happening. He did say he would look into it.

Shortly after Teresa asked for her work evaluation, she was given a letter stating that Hope Mission did not feel that they were able to meet her needs. She was given a day to find somewhere else to go. Fortunately, there was space in Elpida House at the time and within eighteen hours she had moved.

Teresa did manage to get a letter from a lawyer, and with that her allowance and damage deposit, but the long-term cost to her is substantial.

"The thing that bothers me most," Teresa says, "is they know how important my kids are to me. It's hard enough to arrange visits and with the move, everything had to be changed. I was eligible for full parole on December 26, but now, with the move I have a new parole officer. She wants to get to know me, so it's two more months."

"I worry about the other women. I feel grounded in my spirituality, but it's hard. What if you aren't feeling as strong? There are so many things to work against as it is, and they put up more barriers."

NATASHA LAURENCE



BEFORE MY LIFE HAPPENED TO ME

Teresa's story

"A lot stops with me - alcohol abuse, violence, racism. I'm teaching my children to be proud they're native. They have a good future because of what I've learned. They can teach it to their children."

There is a quiet, determined strength in Teresa's voice, a calm that belies the violence and tragedy that have marked most of her 37 years. Born the seventh child in a family of thirteen, Teresa grew up in the shadow of her mother's past. "My mother didn't have the ability to be kind, to nurture. She grew up in a residential school. The devastation of being taken from her home, stripped of everything she knew, being constantly put down affected my mother deeply. She was bitter and critical, unable to feel. She raised us that way."

Teresa describes a time when, as a little girl, she was whistling while she did her chores. She didn't hear her mother tell her to stop, and as a consequence her legs were beaten with willow until she could not get up.

"My mother is a strong woman. She gave birth to my brother in an outhouse, cleaned herself up and was cooking supper a couple of hours later. She did the best she could with what she had. I still respect her."

PEACE

When I went to the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples for mass, I wasn't sure what to expect. I thought I could sit in one of the back pews, observe the service quietly and sneak out if I got bored.

When I walked in, I was immediately caught off guard. The church was nearly full. Children ran back and forth, sitting first beside a parent and then running off to see a friend. Adults talked loudly and enveloped each other with hugs. This felt like a community celebration, not a dull religious service.

I sat down. Behind me, a little boy sat with his grandmother, talking. I overheard the boy, sounding exasperated, tell his grandmother, "It's not just your church. It's everybody's church."

A sweet grass carrier circulated around the church. While people were purifying themselves with the smoke, a guitar player and choir led the congregation in a song. It was not a solemn song, but a joyful thanks for the opportunity to gather.

What is sometimes lost when debating the rights and wrongs of the past and present is that thousands of First Nations people are Christians. Their Christian faith deserves no less respect than traditional First Nation belief systems. At Sacred Heart Church, both traditional beliefs and Christianity are recognized, honored, and made an active part of the church's life and worship.

I looked around the church. The walls were covered with powerful artwork by First Nations and Metis artists. The wall above the altar is dominated by a large traditional cross. Circling the cross is the Medicine Wheel.

I spoke with Father Jim Holland later. He explains the

physical aspect of the church must portray how God is envisioned by a culture. This is why the art and symbolism at Sacred Heart expresses the understanding and culture of First Nations and Metis people.

One example is the Medicine Wheel, which Father Jim says speaks in both Christianity and Native Spirituality. The Medicine Wheel serves many functions, as a symbol and as a teaching tool. The Medicine Wheel's four colours - red, yellow, white and black (or blue) - represent four aspects of the universe including: races, directions, sea-

faith. At Sacred Heart, Father Jim tries to redress the traditional hierarchical structure of the church by positioning himself on equal footing with the congregation.

This focus on the people as the church, rather than the institution, is the main reason for the success of the church. Everyone is welcome at Sacred Heart and all efforts are made so no one feels excluded. People are accepted as they are with no expectations. Baptisms and weddings, for which some churches charge a fee, thereby excluding many people, are free.

One of the important traditions at Sacred Heart is welcoming strangers. At the beginning of the service I attended, all the guests were invited to introduce themselves and were welcomed with applause.

The atmosphere of inclusiveness was continued later in the service when the members of the congregation were to shake each other's hands and say the words "Peace be with you." In many churches this ritual lasts for a short time. At Sacred Heart it lasts nearly ten minutes. Many people circled the entire church to shake everybody's hand.

At Sacred Heart, people are proud of who they are. They have merged what is good and valuable from Native culture and from Christianity. The spirituality of the gospels is blended with Native spirituality. I think it is this pride that allows them to be so open and welcoming. They know who they are and there is no need for defensiveness. I felt more welcomed and included in this church than I have in any other.

REBECCA LIPIATT LONG



sons, aspects of human nature, and stages of life. The overall themes are balance, interconnectedness and inclusiveness.

Father Jim pointed out that people tend to confuse the terms religion and spirituality, and often the structure of a religion becomes more important than the people or the

When Teresa was ten, her godmother was babysitting five of the children. "She lined us all up on the couch and then shot herself. Mom made us clean up. There was such a lot of blood."

"I've lost a lot of people in my life, but I always hid my feelings. I thought my strength had to be physical. I quit school early because of the prejudice. We were the only native family in town and even though my dad always worked and was well-respected, I was spit at. I had things thrown at me. I was teased. I had a hate on for white people."

In the two years that led up to her incarceration, the list of losses Teresa suffered seems difficult to imagine, let alone live through. In 1997 her father died of pancreatic cancer. "He was a beautiful man, warm and kind. At his funeral my mother told me to stop crying, stop putting on an act. I stopped crying."

Later that year her brother murdered her step-brother. In 1998, the day before her birthday, her favourite uncle died of lung cancer. The day after her birthday her niece died of crib death. Later that year her thirty year old brother froze to death while walking to his mother's. In September of 1999 her nephew shot himself.

Four days later, the home she shared with her children was broken into by three men who mistakenly thought a man they had been chasing was in her apartment. She woke up with a knife against her throat. Her nineteen-

year-old neighbour, a friend of the family, heard the noise and came to see what was going on. He managed to convince the intruder to let Teresa go, but suffered a fatal knife wound himself and died in Teresa's daughter's arms.

"I was completely mechanical at that point. The little ounce of warmth I had left was for my children. One week before I was arrested I fainted on the street and woke up in the hospital. All I could think about was my children. I had to drink just to sleep. All the stuff I was carrying...the night before I was incarcerated, my boys went to spend the night with a friend. I drank all night. Then two friends and I went over to a neighbour who had told the landlord I was a bad risk. She was beaten and stabbed and her house ransacked. I pleaded guilty to assault causing bodily harm and got three years."

"My spirit was walking behind me. Now it's walking within me."

Teresa had just begun her three-year federal sentence when a "beautiful intake lady" at Edmonton Institution listened to her story, believed she was willing to learn and requested that Teresa be transferred to Maple Creek Healing Lodge in Saskatchewan. There Teresa discovered her roots and her spirituality.

"It saved my life. I was so willing to learn, so willing to

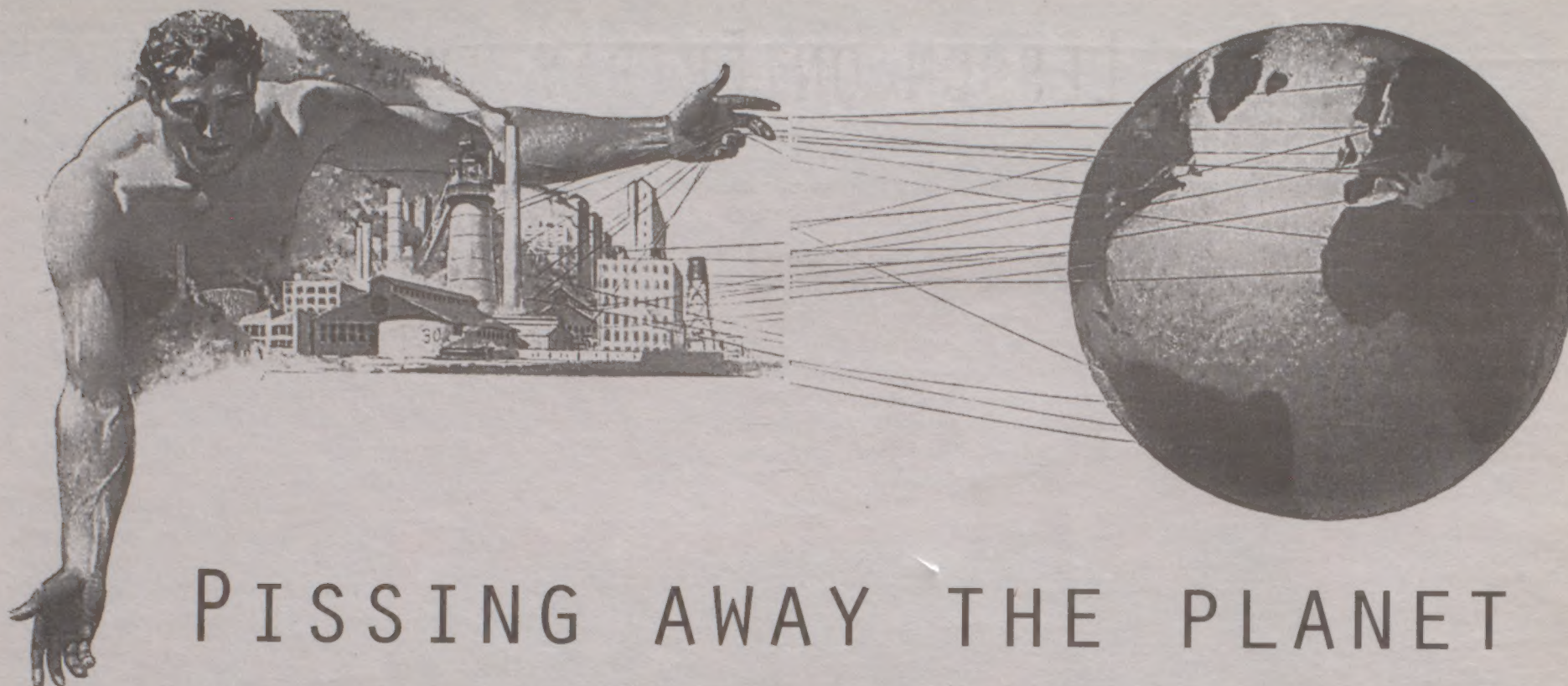
change." As soon as Teresa arrived at Maple Creek, she met with an elder, Pauline Shirt, who arranged a healing sweat just for her. Teresa spent seven months at the lodge.

"My spirituality is a way of life for me now. It is within my being, my heart. It's why I'm whole, sound and grounded. Nothing - disaster, death - nothing can take that away from me. Even when my sister committed suicide in September, that strong gentle feeling was in me.

I'm taking traditional parenting, learning the native way, story telling, strong community and family ties. I'm able to show my children physical love. They've been to sweats, they smudge. They do that on their own. We have nothing but good in our future.

"I am who I was before my life happened to me."

NATASHA LAURENCE



This is the first article I've written for the newspaper. Somebody told me to start it with a catchy first paragraph. "Use a verb" was another suggestion. How's this?: "We'd better change our ways because right here, right now we're pissing the planet down the toilet." Sure, I could have borrowed Dr. William Rees' catchy opening to his lecture at the recent Parkland Institute conference but that would have smacked of piracy. Bill Rees stood in front of a packed audience in one of the U of A Tory lecture theatres on November 18th and asked the question "Is there intelligent life on Earth?" Considering Bill's definition of intelligence as the capacity to find a balance between passion, reason and myth, we might be compelled to ask the question ourselves.

November has been a good month for researching the question here in Edmonton. The Citadel Theatre and the Stanley A. Milner library hosted the Global Visions Festival from the 2nd to the 5th. The festival's lineup of films and forums provided ample food for thought to those concerned about global issues of truth, equality and justice. In particular, the films *The Genetic Takeover or Mutant Food* and *L'Erreur Boreale* (Forest Alert) served as unwavering indictments of transnational corporations whose business practices negatively affect the world and her citizens. What these films showed is that the corporate agenda has gained primacy in today's world. Anything and everything is fair game for commodification (from trees and food to health care service). Corporations are co-opting the rights of citizens and corporate profit-making is being elevated above basic human needs. This is one consequence of extreme neo-liberal thinking that Dr. Rees describes as "perverse economism". For those of us who are tired of this perversion, there are things that we can do.

Getting a membership with the Parkland Institute would be a good start. This year the Institute's annual fall conference was entitled Building a Post-Corporate Society: A How-to Guide for Citizens. The conference featured a number of enlightening lectures throughout the weekend but the one that struck the most resonant chord with me was given by Dr. William Rees, the noted bioecologist from the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning. Rees developed the heuristic and analytic tool of the "ecological footprint." This is defined as "the area of land and water ecosystems required to

produce the resources that the population consumes, and to assimilate the wastes that the population produces, wherever on Earth the relevant land/water may be located." As long as the combined ecological footprints of the Earth's population amounts to an area less than the total area of productive ecosystems on Earth, we are living within the Earth's carrying capacity, according to Rees. This total area of available productive ecosystems is about 12 billion hectares. In his lecture, Bill presented the grim news that the estimated current global ecological footprint is actually over 16 billion hectares. As Dr. Rees said "We can't maintain the gravy-train never mind extending it to the rest of the population." Given this depressing ecological reality we can understand the dark tone of the following quotation dug up by Rees for his lecture:

"The existing human population has already significantly overshot global carrying capacity. Thus, the life-expectancy of our western techno-industrial society is less than 100 years (Duncan 1993) and it will necessarily self-destruct, producing massive ecological damage, social chaos and megadeath (Smith and Sauer-Thompson 1998)." Lest this bleak forecast serve as the impulse for a lemming-

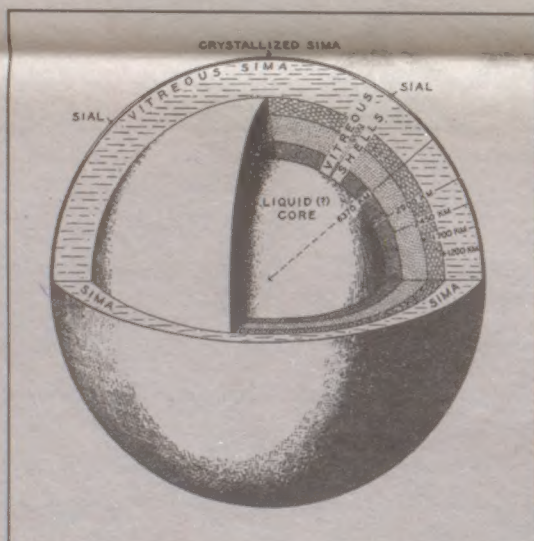
like, wide-scale suicide, Rees sounds a note of hope, warning us not to succumb to such "deflationary pessimism". The good doctor proposes the alternative "Ecological Holism" model in which the economy is recognized as a wholly dependent sub-system of a "materially-closed, non-growing, finite ecosphere (Daly 1992)". Basically folks, we've gotta change our activities to accommodate the reality that there's only one planet and one chance.

Implementing this paradigm shift will not be easy. Indeed, what Parkland conference keynote speaker Tony Clarke refers to as the "occupying forces" of global capitalism are making this implementation more difficult by pushing for more extensive criminalization of dissent. [As if it's okay for them to bugged the planet but the moment we raise our voice in protest they'll set the pepper-spraying thugs upon us. Transnational capitalists are rapacious junkies and they're mainlining Mother Earth and all her children using the tainted rig of global corporate culture.] Clarke, however, makes the encouraging observation that "civil society is emerging as a vehicle for transformation because it's outside both the governmental and corporate realm".

He might have something there. For while conformity is presently serving not the public interest but the interests of global corporatism, conformity is partly by definition a numbers game. If we can inform enough people and have them establish new practices in compliance with certain principles of civic culture we can turn the tide.

We'd better get busy. Our native brothers and sisters, who are closer to the Earth but farther from the seat of economic power, are watching closely and losing patience. The agents of corporate globalism might soon (if they haven't already) turn from fiddling with the democratic process to outright hijacking it. At that point, all the recounts in the land won't save our current society, and revolution will be required to save the Earth.

ROBERT MACGREGOR



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2. Develop a citizens' agenda.
3. Democratize the state.
4. Restructure the nature & role of corporations.
5. Exercise our collective power.
6. Deepen our vision, commitment, and strategies.

A LUCKY LESSON ON FRIDAY THE 13TH

Friday, October the 13th, seemed to be more of a good luck day for Our Voice vendor Churchill Wahweaye, than a field day for the devil in disguise. He had arrived home from another long day of vending Our Voice, when he suddenly realized that he had lost his wallet, after riding on the ETS bus, number 5.

Our veteran Our Voice vendor quickly walked back to the bus stop, where he got off to walk home. He waited there, anticipating the arrival of the bus he had been riding on, so that he could notify the driver and recover his wallet.

The first bus that pulled up wasn't the same bus, but finally, after around half an hour of waiting, the bus that he'd been on arrived at its stop.

When the ETS route 5 bus opened its passenger doors, Churchill asked the driver if he had found his wallet.

At first the driver seemed reluctant to hand over

Churchill's wallet. That scenario changed quickly as a native friend of Churchill, apparently riding on the bus at the time, vouched for his credibility.

The driver asked for Churchill's name. He acknowledged by answering to his name, as the contents inside the wallet verified the identity of our vendor.

The driver immediately returned Churchill's wallet. Churchill was more concerned about finding his bus pass than the money in his wallet. The bus pass, as far as he was concerned, was more of an essential convenience for traveling to work everyday.

Fortunately for our happy vendor, all items were

returned safely to him.

Churchill feels that this incident of losing his wallet was a valuable lesson as he humorously told Our Voice in a recent interview.

Churchill says, "Well, I'm very careful now. You know I'll check it all the time. Like when I get on the bus, and when I get off the bus. I'll make sure that when I go home, I keep it underneath my mattress."

JOHN ZAPANTIS



Is money the new Messiah?

LIVIN' LARGE



The man sat on his bed and turned on the beat-up ghetto blaster he'd found in the garbage and fixed. The smooth sounds of classical strings filled the air making the room seem larger - less claustrophobic.

He went to the sink down the hall and filled his only pot full of water, then put it on the hot plate to boil. Shaking off his jacket, he hung it on the door. Amazing, they had the heat on, for once. If he had a mirror he would have seen a young, handsome face that needed a shave, long black wavy hair and a lean frame - which was not surprising considering his diet. At a glance he looked much younger than his thirty-two years, until you looked into his eyes. They were old eyes. The eyes you normally see on a man of eighty years or more. Eyes that said, "I'm too tired to live, but too strong to die." Sure, he could put a twinkle in them when need be, and make them hard as stone when necessary, but the majority of time they just looked tired, very tired. Shit, the water was boiling over. He put in the last of his teabags and sat down to wait for it to steep.

"Jesus, William, how did you end up here?" he whispered to himself. He thought of the past, some recent, some old, and as usual he felt the bands tighten around his chest, intrusive memories hammering in his head. Yeah, he'd fucked up things in his life, everyone has, but he didn't deserve this shit. I mean he didn't want shit to be free and he wasn't lazy but couldn't life cut him a little fucking slack. Jesus, his father was a pedophile, his brother beat the shit out of his wife when he had the urge, his sister lost her kids to welfare when her drug habit was more important than her fucking kids, and he had to sit by and watch the woman who raised him slowly dying of a broken heart. If he hated them it would have been easier to deal with, but he didn't.

He got up and poured himself some tea (which by now was colder than a witches tit), no sugar - a luxury he couldn't afford often. He grabbed a couple of croissants and sat on his bed and ate. He shut off the light,

went to bed and fell asleep to Leonard Bernstein's Adagio for Strings in C minor.

He woke up the next morning with a start; he'd had a bad dream. In his dream he had been getting the shit kicked out of him by a bunch of circus midgets. It's funny how the most ridiculous shit in dreams seems so real until you wake up. Fucking weird. He rubbed the sleep out of his eyes and tried to remember what the hell he had done to piss off those little bastards so they would come tumbling out of their little car and work his ass over. He shrugged, got up, reheated the remaining tea, and rolled a smoke from the butts he picked. He laughed.

Fuckin' midgets. What next, a bunch of rabid nuns?

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HOMELESS STEP UP STRUGGLE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING



RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 18 (IPS) - Groups leading the struggle for housing in Sao Paulo, Brazil's largest city, have begun to occupy abandoned buildings and set up living quarters in downtown streets to press the government to respond to their demands.

The tactic is similar to that which has brought results for the Movimento dos Sem Terra (MST - Landless Movement), which has garnered widespread support both at home and abroad for its fight for faster and broader agrarian reform, through well-organised occupations of land left idle by large landowners.

Around 30 buildings, most of which belong to the government and have stood empty for years, have been "invaded" by squatters in the past few months.

And when they are evicted on court order, some families set up living quarters with their scant belongings, in the street next to the building, in a glaring protest against the lack of affordable housing.

Some 2,000 homeless gathered outside the seat of the government of the state Wednesday, demanding that announced low-cost housing projects be implemented, and that their voices be heard when it comes to setting priorities for the state housing budget.

The housing problem in Sao Paulo, a city of 10 million, has been getting worse and worse. "Every day there are more people living in the streets," said Maria Inés Volpato, legal adviser to the Housing Pastoral, a local Catholic organisation that has assisted the home-

less for decades.

With the high unemployment rate, families cannot even afford to rent space in what are known locally as "beehives" - old houses packed with dozens of families living in "terrible conditions, unimaginable for a human being," said Volpato.

The city Secretariat of Housing estimates that some 400,000 Sao Paulo families lack even minimally decent housing. But experts in the matter and grassroots movements put the number of people living in the city's "favelas" (shanty-towns) at around two million, with 600,000 crammed into "beehives".

Given that outlook, taking part in organised occupations of buildings, even if illegal, becomes an attractive alternative as a free of cost and sometimes lasting situation, said Volpato.

The occupations are headed by organised groups, like the Union of Movements for Housing (UMM), founded 12 years ago by residents of "beehives".

Recognised by local authorities as the informal mouthpiece of the homeless, the UMM launched an offensive on Oct 25, urging families to move into six buildings simultaneously.

Such actions are aimed at forcing the municipal or state government to seek solutions to the housing problem, whether by providing low-cost housing with long-term financing or land on which to build apartment buildings or small houses.

Once plots of land are obtained, the UMM organises joint projects, mobilising families to work together in solidarity to build their homes, in what is known locally as the "mutirao".

Besides building a sense of community, the shared projects pull down construction costs, thus maximising the scarce resources available for assistance to the poor, says the UMM, which adds that it builds each unit at a cost 35 percent below the price tag quoted by the city government.

But the group also

fight for all of the rights to which citizens are entitled, such as sewerage services, low-cost childcare, recreational spaces and, especially, schools.

Everyone has to study, in order to achieve effective political participation, said Donizeti de Oliveira, one of the group's three coordinators.

Official statistics put the housing shortage in Brazil at 5.4 million units nationwide.

The movement for affordable housing in Sao Paulo has become more radical lately, as new organisations, like the Movement of Homeless Workers, have cropped up.

The success of occupations staged early this year, when 277 families set themselves up as squatters in two buildings, allowed Hamilton de Souza, the leader of the group seen as sort of an "urban MST," to conquer new followers.

An occupation, even if it does not successfully obtain housing for the families involved, is a political act that helps the movement grow, said De Souza.

The increasingly combative movement for housing is also attracting street vendors, who have been at the centre of violent demonstrations in recent years after being banned from doing business in certain neighbourhoods or streets.

"We decided to react this way to the city government's repression of our activity," because if not allowed to work, people cannot pay their rent, said José Ricardo Teixeira, director of the Union of Informal Economy Workers, which claims 12,000 members.

MARIO OSAVA



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Landlord-Tenant Info Line Call 427-4635

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www.thehealthline.com/messages/6100.htm
in partnership with The Health Line, Alberta Consumer Health Information Society

To use this telephone system —

Push the corresponding keys on your telephone dialing pad to access any of the messages listed below. You can also move through the tapes by using the following keys to
Fast Forward press 6, Rewind press 4, Pause press 5, Cancel press the * key

General Information

- 6101 Using this Phone System
- 6102 About the Landlord & Tenant Advisory Board
- 6103 Our Information Services
- 6104 Our Information Package
- 6105 Regulations/Laws You Should Know About
- 6106 Tips for Hassle-Free Renting
- 6107 About Tenancy Agreements
- 6108 The Fixed Term Tenancy
- 6109 The Periodic Tenancy
- 6110 Key Points to Include in Your Tenancy Agreement
- 6111 If You Have A Concern
- 6112 Mediation: Resolve Disputes
- 6113 Security Deposits and Interest Rates
- 6114 Giving and Serving Notices
- 6115 Notice to Vacate
- 6116 Notice of Rent Increase
- 6117 Notice of Entry
- 6118 Notice of Landlord

Landlord Information

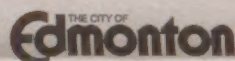
- 6201 Characteristics: Good Landlord
- 6202 Repairs and Maintenance: What is Required?
- 6203 Repairs: Who's Responsible?

- 6204 Normal Wear and Tear
- 6205 Finding Good Tenants
- 6206 The Inspection Report
- 6207 Dealing With Difficult Tenants
- 6208 Ending A Good Tenancy
- 6209 Ending A Problem Tenancy
- 6210 Tenant Doesn't Pay Rent
- 6211 48-hr Notice: End A Tenancy
- 6212 Distress: Taking The Tenant's Property
- 6213 Tenant Abandons The Place
- 6214 Things Left Behind

Tenant Information

- 6301 The Basics to Finding A Place
- 6302 Roommates: Rules on Sharing
- 6303 Guests/Visitors: The Rules
- 6304 What You Should Know About Subletting
- 6305 The Inspection Report: Before You Move In
- 6306 About Security Deposits
- 6307 Paying Rent
- 6308 Rent Increases
- 6309 Characteristics: Good Tenant
- 6310 Moving Out: Things to Do
- 6311 Get Your Deposit Back
- 6312 Getting Your Landlord to Fix Things
- 6313 Breaking A Lease

The Landlord-Tenant Info Line gives information only, not legal advice. If you need further landlord-tenant advice, contact the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board in your city. If you need legal advice, contact your lawyer.
Funded by Alberta Real Estate Foundation



BUSINESS LISTINGS

Northern Alberta Prosthetic & Orthotic services Ltd.
11024-127 Street, Edmonton
T5M 0T2, Ph. 452-9513

1

JA Matheson Equities,
11914-129 Ave, Edmonton,
T5E 0N3, Ph. 455-6688

RBC Dominion Securities
#2300, 10155-102 St.
Edmonton, AB T5J 2P4
Ph. 944-8851

Acoustical & Total Cleaning Services
7940-Coronet Road
Edmonton, AB, T6E 4N8
Ph. 496-9035

City Arts Centre
10943-84 Ave, Edmonton
T6G 0V5, Ph. 496-6955

L & T Mix
Sand and Gravel Ltd.
8336-Sparrow Crescent, Leduc
T9E 8B7, Ph. 986-6721

I Think therefore



Los Americas Housing Co-op

5824 - 19A Avenue



Tired of renting?

Las Americas Housing Co-op offers you an alternative! We are a non-profit, cooperative housing project in the Mill Woods area. We are close to schools, parks, bus routes, hospital and recreation and shopping centres.

Co-operative housing is an exciting and unique way of meeting your housing needs. People join co-ops because they want housing that is;

Decent, Affordable, Safe and a healthier environment for kids.

Co-operative housing provides an excellent opportunity for people to share and to assist each other in ways beyond their housing needs. In addition our housing co-op includes a very nice community hall (ideal for small functions, weddings, etc.) and a safe on-site playground. By being a member you can work with other members to help achieve common co-op goals and participate in co-op social, recreational and educational events

INTERESTED? Please call pager 419-7654

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR CHRISTMAS?

Come to the Downtown Farmer's market on Saturdays 9 AM to 2 PM.

Trappers Enterprises (Betty Nordin) may have that special gift!

Hand painted statuettes of eagles, wolves and Christmas decorations.

You may also call at: 429-1888



MAY THE GREAT SPIRIT BE WITH YOU!

Sacred Heart
CHURCH of the
FIRST PEOPLES

10821-96 St.
Edmonton, AB
www.sacredpeoples.com

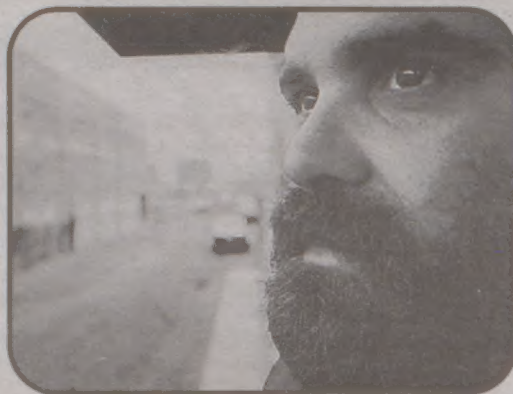


Ph: 422-3052 Fax: 423-0176

OV



PLAYING OUR OWN TUNE!



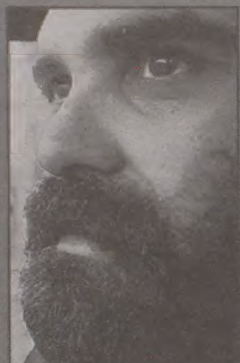
TOM DELORME

When he is not circulating petitions to shut down Easy Rock (Power 92 is next on the list), volunteering for CJSR, or phoning the request lines of local radio stations, Tom dedicates himself to selling Our Voice.

A very active member of the Our Voice community, and asset to vendor meetings, Tom is a great guy to have around. Recently, in a burst of goodwill, he had K-97 dedicate Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" to Reg Taylor, Our Voice's candidate for Prime Minister. As Tom says, "Well, that's what Reg does - blow in the wind." With that much insight, success cannot be far away.

VENDOR
OF THE
MONTH

EVERY
Authorized vendor
has a **BADGE!**

V
E
N
D
O
R
B
A
D
G
E

Vendor Name _____
Number _____
Authorized by _____

OUR VOICE VENDOR'S
CODE

- I will be sober at all times while working.
- I will be polite to all members of the public.
- I will vend only in areas that are authorized.

CITIZEN OF THE MONTH

CEC GARFIN

Edmonton's
REAL
Alternative

VUE
Weekly
EDMONTON'S URBAN VOICE

Available **FREE** at over 1,000 locations
every Thursday

HITCH
WAREHOUSE

Bus: (403) 944-9209
Fax: (403) 486-4690

John Reil

17220 - 107 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5S 1E5
1-800-661-7557



GREGG NICKERSON

Gregg is 33, married, with 2 children and one on the way.

He was born in Nova Scotia, raised in Manitoba and has lived in Edmonton for the past 4 years, where he operates a computer repairing, upgrading and programming business from home.

His favorite saying is, "it never ends", and he lives by it. In addition to earning a little extra money, he does computer work free of charge for 5 non-profit groups, 2 daycare's and many low income people.

"Computers are here to stay and are becoming more and more a necessity." To date he has had 84 computers and many printers donated.

If anyone has computer parts equipment etc. to donate . or needs same, any age or condition, you can reach Gregg, at 466-8469.

Congratulations to Gregg and his family for the excellent work in helping to build a better community.

Every month in Our Voice, we will be featuring someone who has gone the extra kilometre in their lives or in their careers to make a difference in the lives of those who are less fortunate. The Citizen of the Month will receive a dinner for two courtesy of the Garneau Cafe Mosaics on Whyte Avenue.

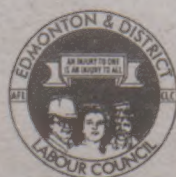
Cafe Mosaics

Our Voice
Magazine and Café
Mosaics'
Citizen of the Month

OUR VOICE
Tools for
Critical Thought

Edmonton & District Labour Council

201, 10425 Princess Elizabeth Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5G 0Y5
Tele: (780) 474-4747 (work) (780) 467-5775 (res)
Fax: (780) 477-1064
agrimald@accessweb.com



Alex Grimaldi, President

OUR VOICE
Tools for
Critical Thought

SEASON'S GREETINGS FROM OUR VOICE



There is no medicine like hope, no
incentive so great, and no tonic so
powerful as expectation of something
tomorrow.

O.S. Marden